THE Reconstructionist

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EDITORIALS

MAKE IT UNANIMOUS!

THE CONVENING, AT THE call of the B'nai B'rith, of the preliminary conference for organizing an American Jewish Assembly is the most important and most encouraging event that has happened in American Jewish life for many a year. The response of 32 of the organizations invited, out of a total of 34, is an indication of the widespread desire among American Jews for an agency that can crystallize American Jewish opinion on the future status of our people, that can ascertain the will of the majority of American Jews and that can give effect to that will in executive action.

The preliminary conference at Pittsburgh defined wisely the scope of the future Assembly's activities and the form of its organization. It showed admirable self-restraint in not seeking to anticipate conclusions at which the Assembly itself must arrive. Its simple program set up the following objectives: "(1) To consider and recommend action on problems relating to the rights and status of Jews in the post-war world; (2) To consider and recommend action on all matters looking to the implementation of the rights of the Jewish people with respect to Palestine; (3) To elect a delegation to carry out the program of the American Jewish Assembly in cooperation with accredited representatives of Jews throughout the world." This program is broad enough to embrace all of organized Jewry, Zionists and non-Zionists, religionists and secularists alike.

The proposed structure of the Assembly also gives no excuse for non-participation on the part of any organization. All national organizations will have equal representation, and all will be represented on the Executive Committee of the Assembly. Though, to be sure, in conformity with the democratic principle, the preponderant majority of the delegates will be elected locally, every important national organization has an opportunity to influence local elections by legitimate persuasion.

In view of all this, we are impelled to ask the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Labor Committee, the only invited organizations that did not send a delegation to the Pittsburgh meeting: Why not make it unanimous?

We have read carefully the recent statement of the American Jewish Committee, and, though we are not impressed with it as a program of action, we can see nothing in it that need rule out partici-

pation by the Committee in the American Jewish Assembly. The statement is too long to quote but it expresses the interest of the Committee in equality of rights and of responsibilities for Jews and non-Jews in every land and recognizes the need "to safeguard the Jewish settlement in and Jewish immigration into Palestine and to guarantee an adequate scope for future growth and development to the full extent of the absorptive capacity of the country." These two purposes clearly fall in with provisions (1) and (2) of the program of the projected Assembly.

Why then, apart from a conceivable lack of confidence in American Jewry as a whole, which we would be loath to impute to the American Jewish Committee, does it hesitate to unite with the other Jewish organizations in the Assembly? Two possible reasons suggest themselves, but to us neither of them is convincing. One of them is that, since the American Jewish Committee looks upon Jewry as a "religious community" rather than as a people or nationality, it finds a Jewish Assembly in which secular organizations are included inappropriate as the representative of American Jewry. But, as members of the religious community of American Jews, the members of the American Jewish Committee ought to follow the leadership of its rabbinic and congregational bodies. If those organizations see no inconsistency with their religious convictions in participating in the Assembly along with secular organizations, surely the American Jewish Committee need not hesitate on religious grounds to do so.

The other possible reason for the American Jewish Committee's failure to join is its fear that the convening of the projected Assembly might play into the hands of the anti-Semites. In the past, the Committee has been very wary of any kind of Jewish representative gathering which could be construed by our enemies as constituting a governing body for the Jewish community and implying a divided allegiance, to America and to world Jewry. Events should, by now, have convinced the American Jewish Committee that anti-Semites can invent a Jewish International headed by the Elders of Zion even without the existence of any Jewish Assembly. Indeed, the recorded public acts of the projected Jewish Assembly would be clear evidence to those who wish to know the truth that no divided political allegiance is even remotely contemplated by any section of Jewry in America. In any event, the fears of the American Jewish Committee will not be assuaged by non-partcipation, since that would not prevent the Assembly from taking place.

As for the Jewish Labor Committee, we are at a loss for any plausible reason why it should not have responded favorably to the invitation to attend the Conference unless it be that, having always worked in close cooperation with the American Jewish Committee, it has suspended judgment on the matter until that organization has determined its stand.

Although the Assembly could do a good job even without the participation of the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Labor Committee, we should hate to see their names absent from the roster. We have, at times, had occasion to differ with them on specific issues, but we recognize them as representing important elements in the Jewish population and we respect the right of their point of view to a hearing. And certainly the Assembly can do a better job if given the authority to speak for all organized Jewry. There is tremendous difference between the effectiveness of an assembly that includes *all* Jewish organizations of nation-wide scope and one that includes *almost all*. The enemies of our people and

those who have a special interest in denying us specific rights can be depended on, for their own sinister purposes, to widen any rift that seems to present itself. We must not enable our enemies to employ the technique of *divide and conquer.* We therefore implore the members of the American Jewish Committee and of the Jewish Labor Committee not to stand in the way of Jewish unity in this critical time. Let them fall in line with the other organizations that have registered their intention to participate in the forthcoming American Jewish Assembly. They owe it to themselves as well as to American Jewry as a whole to take part in the democratic formulation of a public policy for saving European Jewry, or what will remain of it after the war, and for securing the future of our people in its homeland and in the diaspora. Let the will of American Jewry to act effectively and in unison be unanimous.

FREEDOM IS INDIVISIBLE

SIGNS ARE RAPIDLY MULTIplying that our march to freedom, now being made at great cost of treasure and tears, is being severely handicapped by many impediments. These are not all of the physical kind, nor the kind which is creating so much concern in Mr. Donald Nelson's WPB.

Our progress is, above all, handicapped by moral impediments, by the brazenness with which various brands of Fascism are rearing their ugly heads and the boldness with which some governments-in-exile and some of our officials controlling foreign affairs contradict by their actions our ardent professions of devotion to freedom. There no doubt is a relationship between these two.

Here at home we view with the gravest concern the continued discrimination against Negroes and Jews in plants manufacturing war materials urgently needed by our forces at the very time when the Government is about to invade our homes to call out some of our mothers in order to fill necessary places in the machine shops of the nation. Equally alarming is the yet unexplained refusal of Mr. McNutt, head of WMC, to meet with a committee of nationally prominent citizens who came to protest the conspiracy on the part of railroads and unions to prevent Negroes from continuing their work on the locomotives of Southern railroads. A new lease on life was granted the Dies Committee by the disturbing majority of four to one. This was done by Congress *in spite* of—we should hate to think that it was *because* of—the undenied charge on the floor of the Congress by a member of the Committee that Mr. Dies refuses to make public a list of some 150 Nazi-front or Nazi-inspired organizations of American citizens. These are a few of many dangerous gaps in the armor of our democracy. The highlight of the anti-democratic movement at the moment is the build-up which the America First Committee and other native discredited Fascist organizations are preparing for the labor-baiter, Eddie Rickenbacker, as a possible presidential candidate for 1944.

The bruises suffered by that democracy in whose name we are called upon to risk our all are revealed in the information coming to us from abroad. Reports of incidents, which seem to be governed by an intricate diplomatic situation, reveal, when decoded from their obscure diplomatic verbiage, simply a deliberate attempt to sabotage freedom. We select only two glaring instances. One of them is our own policy in North Africa as reflected in the State Department's blessing to the appointment of Marcel Peyrouton as Civilian Governor of North

Africa. He has been for a long time one of France's most notorious and unregenerate anti-Semites, who, as far back as almost ten years ago, introduced into North Africa discriminatory anti-Jewish laws which rivaled those of Hitler in Germany, and who, immediately upon France's collapse, — brought about by people of his kind, — put into operation all the Nuremberg laws in his native country. He has not yet seen fit to explain away these shameful acts. That our own State Department is embarrassed by the situation is evidenced by the buck-passing now going on when an attempt is made to find out exactly who is responsible for it, and precisely how the appointment was engineered.

But, by all odds, the most brazen and deliberately persistent actions in defiance of freedom are those on the part of many who make up the official family of the Polish Government-in-Exile. They are unrelenting in their anti-Semitism, in spite of the official mealy-mouthed protestations to the contrary, and in spite of their plea to us to free the Poles from Fascist oppression. In England, for example, several outspoken anti-Semitic magazines are being published by officials of the Polish Government-in-Exile. Others express their delight that Palestine, in admitting a large number of Jews, would thereby relieve post-war Poland of part of its "surplus population," by which, of course, they mean its Jews. Only recently we were treated on this continent to the incredible spectacle of Mr. Sikorski, head of the Polish Government-in-Exile, repeating on a recent visit in Mexico the unfounded and discredited charges of Mexican anti-Semites against the Jews residing there. He even took occasion to lecture a committee of Jews who came to visit him. This indicates what Jews may look forward to, should Mr. Sikorski and his ilk be restored to power.

We suppose that many would caution discretion in discussing our grievances against the government of an ally which now lies prostrate. But we believe that we have held our peace long enough. We must not fall into the trap of imputing to victims of oppression an innocence which they do not possess. This unmitigated anti-Semitism in time of war, surging up in so many quarters, must be recognized for what it is. General Giraud may have been misquoted as having said that the problem of the Jews in North Africa is a local affair. But that many other highly placed officials so regard it cannot be doubted. Nor can we permit to go unchallenged the assumption that the problem of the Jews of Poland is a domestic Polish affair. It is no more Poland's private affair than a man's killing his wife and children is his private affair. Law exists to safeguard everybody wherever he happens to be—whether on the public highway or in his home.

Justice is indivisible. So, too, is freedom. We cannot have freedom limited. The exclusionist policies of some of our munition plants and Mr. Sikorski's attitude toward the Polish Jews in Mexico are part of the same conspiracy against freedom. It will profit us little to free the Germans and Italians from their oppressors, if we do not free all people, all over the world, from all oppression.

This is a global war. It is fought in the cause of global freedom. The French Administration in North Africa and the Polish Government-in-Exile must recognize this fact, as must all Americans at home. The freedom that Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill talk about, the freedom purchased by so much blood and tears, this freedom is indivisible.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SESSIONS ON SATURDAYS AS A WAR MEASURE

A BILL JUST PASSED BOTH Houses of the New York Legislature, virtually by a unanimous vote, to authorize the holding of public school sessions on Saturdays "in order to adjust the school week or school term to permit the release of pupils for work on farms or in canneries" on other days of the week, and to permit the schools to receive full state aid in fulfillment of the present legal requirement of a minimum of 190 sessions per year. The bill also provides that "no pupil, whose religious observances prohibit the same, shall be required to attend any Saturday session," and leaves it to the discretion of local school authorities to make use of this permissive legislation. The bill now awaits the signature of the Governor, who will most likely sign it because of the unanimity of the vote in the Legislature.

Jewish agencies learned about this bill through the newspapers. The Synagogue Council of America immediately wrote to the Governor and sent a delegation to see him in order to protest this legislation and propose amendments to the bill. It also sent letters to rabbis in the state inviting their cooperation in this protest. Even while the delegation was discussing this bill at the Capitol building, the Senate in another part of the building passed it unanimously. No Jewish member of the Legislature evidently thought enough about it to ask that the vote be postponed or to notify in time the Jewish agencies concerned in such legislation. Despite the existence of several Jewish civic protective agencies, there seems to be no one in Albany to watch such legislation as do the representative agencies of the other faiths.

This lack of coordination and of timely community action is reflected also in the proposals for modification of the bill as set forth in the letter of the Synagogue Council. That letter properly points to the embarrassment which this legislation would bring to Jewish children even if permitted legally to stay away from school on Saturdays. Both they and their parents may be stigmatized as unpatriotic, if they take advantage of their rights. In addition, home situations may be created which will encourage disrespect for parents and for religious observance.

To avoid this embarrassment and to protect state aid to the schools, this letter sent out by the Synagogue Council proposes "the addition of an hour a day to the five day schedule attendance." In other words, in order to save Jewish children from the possible stigma of lack of patriotism, if they exercise their legal right to absent themselves on Saturdays, the Synagogue Council seems ready to reduce the number of hours of their Jewish instruction and to jeopardize the very existence of our Talmud Torahs or weekday schools. Already these Talmud Torahs and their pupils are victims of reduced hours brought about by blackouts, dim-outs, difficulties of transportation and other war measures. Now comes a proposal by a synagogue agency further to curtail the time for Jewish religious schooling. This proposal is made by a Jewish religious agency at the very time when Protestant and Catholic religious agencies are carrying forward with increasing pressure the movement to release pupils on public school time in order to enable them to receive religious instruction. If the state is so squeamish about the public school schedule at this time, why should the religious school with its very limited schedule be asked to make all the sacrifices? Strange, indeed, is the fact that when formulating counter proposals to be offered to the authorities, which so vitally affect the existence of

Jewish schools, the Synagogue Council should not have invited the advice and cooperation of existing Jewish educational agencies.

Are there any practical counter-proposals which can be offered to the authorities without prejudice to the Jewish child, to the Jewish Sabbath, or to the Jewish school and which would, at the same time, protect state aid to the public schools who release pupils for work on the farms or in canneries. These practical counter-proposals can be borrowed from measures taken by government authorities in Washington. These authorities have ordered colleges and professional schools to curtail vacation schedules and school terms and to streamline courses. In addition, these authorities are contributing large funds to these colleges and schools because of war needs. Individual states have taken many liberties with high school courses in order to adjust to the needs of the war emergency. Why should the great State of New York be less generous and less practical or, if you will, less patriotic? Why should New York State curtail its financial aid to the public schools if they release pupils for a few weeks during the year to engage in war emergency services? Such release of pupils entails no extra financial obligations on the part of the state, nor is the educational sacrifice of pupils so severe as to prove damaging to child or community.

The Synagogue Council and others have done well to ask the Governor for a public hearing on this bill before he signs it. Perhaps he can still recommend a reconsideration of it by the Legislature, or perhaps he can remove some of its embarrassment for members of the Jewish faith by his executive interpretation of this legislation. In the meantime, all Jewish agencies can help by writing to the Governor to protest against Senate Bill No. 325 and Assembly Bill No. 379.

SAVE EUROPEAN JEWRY NOW!

WE HEARTILY ENDORSE the demand for immediate practical action voiced by the Seminary students in the article "Retribution Is Not Enlough," printed elsewhere in this issue, to save those Jews who still can be saved from the policy of utter and ruthless extermination which Hitler has decreed for all Jews in Nazi-occupied European lands.

A kind of paralysis has seized American Jewry. There is one section of American Jewry which seems to be wholly indifferent to the tragic plight of our European brethren, either because of plain ignorance of the facts, or out of fear of raising an undue clamor about what erroneously seems to them to be a specifically Jewish tragedy. Nothing too bitter can be said about such Jews. The rest of American Jewry, stricken dumb by grief, seems to have accepted resignedly the fate of European Jewry. There has been some fasting and much weeping and fervent praying, but no such concerted and ceaseless hammering at the conscience of mankind as will make the United Nations act with force and immediacy to stop the mass slaughter and to save those who can be saved.

If our inaction cannot be avoided, it can at least be understood, in the light of our sorrow and our hopelessness. But how explain the indifference, amounting almost to callousness, of our own country and of the other United Nations? The plight of Lidice aroused a continent, and other Lidices arose to take its place. Yet the hell of Lidice was but a spark compared to the gehenna of Warsaw, and Warsaw was only one of many such gehennas. Why are the nations silent and lift no hand to snatch the remaining Jews from certain death? The problem is not

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REALITIES AND VALUES

FOR A TIME THERE WAS a blessed lull in the activities of the so-called American Council for Judaism (*Judaism* being in their jargon a synonym for *anti-Zionism*). Under the impact of the indignation encountered by them as a result of their attacks on Zionism, they had agreed to a truce in the interest of harmony in the ranks of the Reform rabbinate and of American Jewry generally. But that truce proved of brief duration. The Council is bent on resuming its nefarious activities and the battle is on again. But the Council enters the fray with reduced forces because of the withdrawal of some of its most influential members, who, though remaining *non-Zionists,* were apparently unwilling to become a party to *anti-Zionist* activity. It will be interesting to see what happens at the next convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. How will that body, of which the rabbinic members of the Council represent a defeated and disgruntled minority, react to the Council's betrayal of Jewish interests? We have no doubt that the Conference will take a stand which, if not an unqualified endorsement of Zionism, will at least be an emphatic condemnation of the irresponsible anti-Zionist agitation of the Council.

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BEFORE AMERICA'S ENTRY INTO the war, isolationists sought to keep us out by voicing the fear that our entering would mean the end of civil liberty in America. We have been in the war for more than a year and our civil liberties have not been impaired. This point was stressed by Assistant U. S. Attorney General Wendell Berge at the annual meeting of the Chicago Civil Liberties Committee. He cited as an instance of the respect for civil liberties the treatment accorded to the sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses, who refuse, on religious grounds, to salute the flag. In West Virginia a local police officer was convicted for having personally participated in mob violence against members of the sect. Even more significant was the decision of a specially-constituted three-judge Federal District Court which declared unconstitutional the provisions of the law requiring compulsory salute of the flag in schools when enforced against children having religious convictions against such ceremonies. This decision will be reviewed by the Su-

preme Court, but, as the Assistant Attorney General correctly pointed out in his address, "the remarkable fact is that such a decision is handed down at all in this country in time of war. It is inconceivable that such a decision could be made in a country heading for totalitarianism and the abolition of civil rights."

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FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR readers who live too far away to have come to the Conference on Congregational Singing, this brief report: Held on Monday, February 22, it was attended by two hundred men and women representing many individual congregations. The large majority were cantors, rabbis, and musical directors who were immediately concerned about the problems of the passive congregation. The discussions following the prepared papers and the demonstration of singing brought forth numerous requests for other conferences of the same kind, and for the preparation of a volume which would contain suitable material for congregational singing. All agreed on the importance of group participation; the main problem was: How can we get the people to sing? A resolution at the close of the meeting called upon the original committee to study the matter further. This committee consists of representatives from the Jewish Music Forum and the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation.

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AT LAST THE SYNAGOGUES have begun to realize their own strength, and to apply it. Two Boston congregations, Kehillath Israel and Mishkan Tefila, have affiliated en masse with the Zionist Organization. Other congregations are reported to be planning similar action. This development is highly commendable, not only because it will bring considerably increased membership into the ZOA—that is undoubtedly the original purpose and the obvious desideratum. But what is not quite so obviously desirable in this new form of affiliation is the emergence of the synagogue as a power on the American scene. American Jews, even unsynagogued, have heretofore been willing to concede that religious institutions are useful, since they serve to inspire Jews to contribute to worthy causes. But the congregations themselves have never been reckoned with as a *power,* an organized voice and influence. Our generation is awakening to the tremendous man-power which organized religion represents, and the leaders of synagogue life have the right and the duty to throw the weight of that man-power on the side of the constructive causes in Jewish life. Thus far they have permitted themselves to be divided and to be ruled by those communal institutions which pride themselves upon the fact that they transcend denominational differences. With intelligent direction, the congregations, reform, orthodox or conservative, can devise means of transcending their own differences, cooperating with one another in the causes that unite them, and can wield the influence to which their numbers and their religious orientation entitle them.

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WHEN A MAN LIKE DR. EMANuel Neumann resigns his position on the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, and at the same time issues the kind of statement he has issued, a number of questions are in order. In his statement, he accuses the Emergency Committee of recurrent factional and personal differences, vacillation in policy and action, absence of centralized administrative direction, failure to adopt a definite and comprehensive program of activities, and the failure to adopt the necessary budget. These are serious charges, made in serious times. What

One Year Nearer to Peace — The Challenge to Religion*

By ROBERT GORDIS

After Victory— What?

THE first few months after America's entry into the war coincided with the lowest ebb in the fortunes of the United Nations, but the tremendous resources of men and material in the United States and the incredible heroism of the Russian people have turned the tide of battle. Though the Nazis and the Japanese still hold most of their conquered territory, they are now definitely on the defensive and victory may now be described as a foregone conclusion.

No one in his senses expects victory to be early or easy. Untold lives must yet be sacrificed, but the end of the bloody road is now in sight. The crucial issue that can no longer be postponed is, "After victory—what?" The First World War was followed by an armistice that lasted twenty-five years. Is the Second World War to be followed by another armistice, a temporary interlude, so that the infants of today may grow up to fight and die in a Third World War two decades hence? Or have men really decided that they want a lasting peace after this bloodbath? Pious wishes and good intentions will of themselves avail little. It is a truism that the issue whether this war will end in armistice or peace depends upon the kind of post-war world we shall build.

Each day makes it clearer that there are two schools of thought on this basic problem. One is clear, determined and explicit, the other clouded, divided within itself and largely unconscious of its power. The one group which is powerful and insistent knows what it wants. It wants to go back to the world before the war, which it found perfectly satisfactory. The Second World War it regards as an unpleasant interruption in the status quo, and sometimes not so unpleasant, since it has brought soaring war profits in its wake. Like the Bourbons of old, they learn nothing and forget nothing.

Imperialism As Usual

This is the school of imperialism as usual. Immediately after the Atlantic Charter was proclaimed, the present British government made it clear that the Four Freedoms do not apply to the subject peoples of the Far East. Recently, Mr. Churchill has declared, "I have not been called to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire." The Secretary for Colonies, Lord Cranbourne, has stated that British imperial interests come before all else, and he can be trusted to mean what he says. Last year, the steamer *Struma,* carrying 767 Jewish refugees—men, women and children—was refused admittance to Palestine and brought back to Istanbul. The British officials were warned that the ship was unseaworthy and liable to sink any moment, but they refused to permit its passengers to land. The ship sank with all 767 lives lost. The world was horrified, but Lord Cranbourne rose in Parliament to pay tribute to the "courage" of the British officials who had stoutly resisted any appeals. Recently, Sir Anthony

*Several months have elapsed between the writing of this article and its publication. Though, if it were written now, the author might refer to more recent material to document some of his statements, his arguments are as true and cogent as at the time when the article was written.—*Editors.*

Eden was asked about post-war aims and he is reported to have answered with a smile: "That is easy. After the war, everything will naturally fall right back into its place."

The Tories may be as dynamic as Churchill, as charming as Eden or as callous as Cranbourne, but they are at one in waging this war to defend the British Empire on the old terms. Hence India today is under military rule, seething with rebellion and riot, of which we hear nothing because of the iron-clad censorship.

On a smaller but perhaps more intensive scale, the Palestine situation discloses the same old technique of Empire. Jews and Arabs are prohibited from meeting together, lest they discover a community of interest. For twenty years, down to the present, Arab feudal landlords and fascists have been continually appeased by the sacrifice of Jewish rights, in spite of the clear-cut violation of Britain's sacred pledge. The unrelenting resistance of the British government to the creation of a Jewish Army for Palestinian and stateless Jews, to take its place with the fighting forces of the United Nations, is part and parcel of the same philosophy.

Nor may we Americans adopt the "holier-than-thou" attitude. Imperialism as usual has been the watch-word of British policy, but the American government has been loyally, much too loyally, cooperating with it, by unbroken silence, where it should have spoken out and acted. No one in the world today could have solved the problem of India, or at least led to a settlement, except President Roosevelt. Yet he has thus far chosen to let his tremendous moral authority remain in abeyance, doubtless because the British government wants no "interference" with its policy of suppression. In London, material is being collected in official archives on the atrocities against all the United Nations, but thus far the oldest and first victims of Nazism, who have been incredibly tortured since the Nuremberg Laws, have been too unimportant to be granted even this sorry fragment of justice. In no public address directed to a general audience has Mr. Churchill or Mr. Roosevelt seen fit to include the name of the Jewish people, along with the other victims of present-day tyranny, in spite of the fact that the President has been one of the truest friends the Jewish people have ever possessed. It was only on December 17th, after authentic reports showed that two million Jews had been slaughtered, and extraordinary protests were registered by the Jewish world that a condemnation and "a solemn resolution that those responsible for these crimes shall not escape retribution" was published by the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union. Similarly, the American government could not be prevailed upon to issue any statement reaffirming its official adherence to the Balfour Declaration on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration. All the facts regarding the Darlan-Giraud adventure are not available, but one can only hope that we have not been practicing appeasement of fascism for the sake of a bloodless victory, that may prove to be neither bloodless nor a victory. One thing is certain. The transaction has dealt a body-blow to the morale of the French and other conquered peoples of Europe.

Isolationism and Business as Usual

If imperialism as usual has been the major offense of the British government against a genuine peace, the major American sins have been isolationism and business as usual. The recent victory of the Republican Party at the polls has been interpreted, rightly or wrongly, as a sign of war-weariness on the part of the American people and as a trend to reaction, and so within Congress and without,

the reactionaries and isolationists have taken new heart. The publisher of the *Chicago Tribune,* Mr. McCormick, has been arguing in his nation-wide radio broadcasts that, with proper camouflage, cities can virtually avoid airplane bombings! The implication is clear—we can retire behind our oceans and practice isolationism once again, until a future and even more tragic Pearl Harbor comes to remind us that mankind is one, and that the nations of the world will either live or perish together. At the recent convention of the National Association of Manufacturers, its president, Mr. Witherow, declared: "I am not fighting this war in order to give a quart of milk to every Hottentot or a T.V.A. to the Danube Valley region." Those whose philosophy he expounded are fighting rather to destroy the social gains of the pre-war years and to forestall any additional social progress. Their goal is a world of "free and open" competition, in which huge corporations are regulated and taxed as little as possible, labor unions do not presume to bargain for the employee, small business men can be crushed to the wall and eliminated from economic life, farmers work for the bank holding the mortgage, and workers live in the perpetual shadow of unemployment. So long as profits continue uninterruptedly, it does not matter over-much that mankind is brought to the threshold of a Third World War.

Basic Goals for the Post-War World

The maintenance of imperialism, isolationism and business as usual constitutes the post-war program of the party of the past, all-powerful in the present. Ranged on the other side are the vast majority of men and women on earth, the free nations, the nationalities of Nazi-occupied Europe and the colonial races of Africa and Asia. It is they who are bearing the brunt of the struggle, and paying for it in blood, sweat and tears. They are fighting for a genuine and enduring peace, not an armistice, but all too easily they are persuaded that it is impractical and unnecessary to think of peace while the war is going on. *Now it is too early—then it will prove too late.* Those who demand peace for their sacrifice must not forget that like causes produce like effects; if there is to be no repetition of the Second World War, we must prevent a restoration of the conditions that preceded and caused it.

There is no room in the post-war world for imperialism as usual, and most of the British people understand and agree whole-heartedly. The process of transforming the British Empire into a Free Commonwealth of Nations, which has already been so successful, must go beyond the English-speaking lands and include as its ultimate objective the granting of Dominion status to every "possession" of the British Crown. If the sun is never to set on the British flag, in the future as in the past, it must be the sun of freedom and voluntary cooperation.

So too, isolationism as usual must go. In a world of airplanes, international cartels and world trade, isolationism is blindness. If the blindness is genuine, it is stupidity; if pretended, it is hypocrisy. For a nation to take the law into its own hands is as immoral and impractical as for an individual. The out-worn doctrine of unlimited national sovereignty must necessarily be drastically revised and some type of world organization must evolve. The economic, military and political problems involved are enormous, but that cannot justify disregarding the challenge of the hour. The issues must be grappled with and overcome, because no other solution is possible.

Finally, business as usual must go. In the midst of the war, the Conservative

British government has been able to find the time and energy to propose the Beveridge Plan, the most comprehensive program of social welfare ever suggested for a democracy. The plan would take care of every Briton from the cradle to the grave, supply pre-natal care and medical services, employment and health insurance throughout his lifetime, old age pension and burial costs as well. Once again the Conservative Party in Britain has shown its practical wisdom in dealing with internal issues in liberal and forward-looking fashion. Here in America even the liberals are too frightened to go forward. In the last analysis, the future of the post-war world will be determined by whether men are convinced that security can be achieved within the framework of democracy. If not, we shall again see men, driven to despair by fear, want and suspicion of their fellows, prepared to sacrifice their freedom, and finally their lives, on the altar of a new fascist Moloch.

For those who want world peace there are two basic goals for the post-war world —a program of social progress within each nation, and a world-organization to embrace the peoples of the earth. Implementing each portion of this program requires wide knowledge, practical skill, unswerving vigilance and unshakable loyalty to the ideal. The defenders of yesterday are organized and determined in their objectives. The builders of tomorrow must be no less.

The Role of Religion

Where shall this leadership and unity be found? Here, we are profoundly convinced, lies the greatest challenge facing religion throughout its history. It is well-known that the Nazi onslaught against civilization launched its fiercest blows against Christianity and Judaism, which are dedicated to the concept of the Unity of God and all His children. In Nazi-enslaved Europe, heroic men of God, in the clergy and the laity alike, have borne witness to their faith and resisted the foe with unsurpassed courage. But resistance is not enough. Religion should take the lead in preparing for the rebuilding of the world in the spirit of the Kingdom of God. And this, not only because that is religion's only *raison d'être,* but because no other force in society is able or willing to do so. Post-war problems are today being studied by small groups of idealistic peace advocates and by bodies concerned with special aspects, such as the various institutions on post-war Jewish problems now functioning. But these groups are too small in numbers and lacking in influence to act as an effective counter-poise to those who want a return to the status quo ante. The secular idealists are too few, and the political groups are too involved in their private ends to devote themselves to this great task.

It is the churches and synagogues, whose membership runs into the tens of millions, that can be the reservoirs of practical idealism which alone can save the world. What greater contribution can organized religion make than taking the lead in organizing immediately Institutes on Peace Problems in every community in the land. Preferably, these Institutes should be non-sectarian in sponsorship, with the churches and synagogues inviting the cooperation of all other community organizations, but better several Institutes than none at all. The syllabi and guides for discussion should be prepared by central organizations like the Federal Council of Churches of Christ, the National Catholic Welfare Council and the Synagogue Council of America. Each issue should be presented without dogmatism. The syllabi should present the facts, indicate the various solutions

proposed as well as the objections raised, and thus pave the way for individual discussion by the participants. If groups in thousands of American communities, or even in hundreds, were to begin clarification of post-war issues and thus prepare the nation for dealing intelligently with them at the proper time, we should not be unprepared in the hour of decision.

In saving the world, religion will save its own soul. It will once again take up the mantle of prophetic leadership which it has too long suffered to trail in the dust. We shall then do more than repeat the glorious slogan of freedom. We shall help fulfill the promise of democracy, so that every human being, even the Hottentots, and every people, even the Jews, may enter into its God-given heritage of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Each day will bring us nearer, not only to victory over our enemies on the battlefield, but to a peace worth fighting for.

Palestine and Jewish Survival in a World of Democracy*

By ABRAHAM G. DUKER

The Need for Adjusting Zionism to an Expanding Democracy

THE correctness of the Zionist analysis of assimilation and anti-Semitism needs no additional proof. As far as we know, however, this analysis holds true only under conditions of a contracting democracy, where anti-Semitism is an ever-growing and permanent factor. Under conditions of an expanding democracy, which we hope will emerge after this war, the Zionist analysis may not prove to be correct. This applies particularly to the contention that Zionism is indispensable to satisfying the physical needs of the persecuted Jews. However, most Zionist arguments and propaganda are based on the premise that anti-Semitism will not cease from this earth in our own days. Zionists have often been accused of the failure to consider the possibility of the emergence of genuine democracy. Until now the answer to this accusation was a simple one. Zionists needed only to point to the realities of the situation. Today, the appeal merely to the physical needs of the Jewish people is inadequate. Such a plea can easily be met by the answer that democracy will provide the solution for these physical needs through the introduction and enforcement of minority rights everywhere.

But Zionism offers satisfaction not only for the physical needs of the Jews, such as a place of refuge for the homeless, and security for those threatened by anti-Semitism. Zionism, in its wider implications, presents a solution for the problem of Jewish group survival. This problem is bound to become more complicated with the extension of democracy. We all know the effects of granting of equal rights to Jews on Jewish group life in Western countries. These effects are vividly seen in statistics of conversion and intermarriage in Europe. In the United States they are very evident in the psychological inadequacy among Jews in reacting to the fact that they are Jews. The phenomenon of Jewish self-hate and the fear of identification with the Jewish community are continually striking deeper roots among the younger generation. The

*A resume of an address delivered before the Zionist Convention, October 16, 1942.

fear of anti-Semitism acts in a dual role, as a factor of cohesion and as a factor of diffusion. Its removal would doubtless result in a similar twofold reaction, particularly among the Jews in Nazi-held Europe. Many would, as a result of their experiences, seek a permanent return to Judaism; these would be the forces for Zionism and would supply the *halutzim* of the future. Others would desire to abandon their Jewish ties as quickly as possible, finding the appeal of world democracy an even greater incentive for assimilation than the inducements which attracted them to give up their Jewish ties before and during the rise of Nazism.

The Breakdown of the Reservoir of Jewish Survivalist Forces

Heretofore, the Jewish centers in Eastern Europe have been both quantitatively and qualitatively the reservoir for Jewish survival. It is no exaggeration to state, that all that is positive in Jewish life today stems from these centers. Whatever forces for survival exist in any country in the world today drew their nourishment and strength from the communities of Poland, Lithuania, Carpatho-Ukraine and others. These centers are practically gone now. Soviet Jewry, forced into assimilation both by pressure of government-controlled culture and by the absence of prejudice, is in danger of going the way of the Ten Lost Tribes. While I believe that some portion of Russian Jewish youth can still be salvaged for Judaism, I am certain that the Jewish community in Russia will not be a major factor in the promotion of Jewish survival, even under the best conditions of a lasting rapprochement between the Soviet Union and the democracies, a development for which we all hope and pray.

The centers in Poland and Lithuania and other countries are, in my opinion, irretrievably lost, in spite of the fact that many Jews may continue to reside in those regions. Decimated by massacres, hunger and deportations, all the Jewish communities in Nazi-occupied Europe will emerge exhausted. The tendency to assimilation was much in evidence in these regions before the war, even in countries like Poland. Under the best conditions, Polish Jewry is bound to emerge from the war weak and resourceless. The probable territorial expansion of the Soviet Union is bound to weaken it further. Many Polish Jews will want to join their relatives in Russia, others will be attracted to it by better economic opportunities. Large numbers will emigrate to Palestine, Western Europe and other counrties.

Post-War Democracy No Guarantee of Survival

The long range trend towards democracy and equality, for which all Jews hope, will exact its further toll from Jewish group life. This trend towards liberalism must be and will be welcomed by all Jews, regardless of its effects on the survival of Judaism. We must plan our life in a world of ever expanding socialization. We cannot afford to see a return to toryism and the rule of unbridled finance capitalism. Indeed, a victory for the "business as usual" elements is bound to result in a new and more dangerous version of fascism.

At the same time, we cannot afford to present Zionism, a liberal nationalist movement, intimately connected with the development of democratic social forms of living in Palestine, as though it offered merely an answer to refugee problems and relief for Jewish suffering. The makers of the coming world order may answer that line of argument by affirming that the Four Freedoms will take care of Jews as well as of others.

While a return to the Wilsonian principle, of national self-determination is possible, and some optimists among us

can already detect it in the numerous writings on post-war problems, thus far it seems that the principle is being applied only to very large units like China and India. But in the large countries there seems to be much impatience with the smaller national groups. They are being blamed for the present war, rather than the rival imperialisms of the larger countries. Voices are raised in favor of even the cultural assimilation of the smaller nations. At best, federalism is being offered as a means of assuring the survival and harmlessness of small nations. There is much talk about the limitation of sovereignty. It is significant, however, that no indications of a willingness to surrender any of their sovereignty have come from larger countries, such as the Soviet Union, China, England and the United States. There are many voices in favor of some form of cultural pluralism for the smaller nations, but these voices are still few and far between.

In view of this general belief in democracy as the blanket solution of all physical problems, Jews who believe in Jewish group survival must plead not only for the physical needs of the Jewish people. They must reassert their conviction, now enforced by historical experience, that Jewish group survival, be it religious or cultural, is impossible without a Jewish Palestine.

Ahad-Haamism Not Enough

But sociologically speaking, survival is not merely a qualitative phenomenon. I cannot accept the dictum of a leader of the Agudath Israel, who, after discussing the terrible numerical losses suffered by Jews in Europe, stated that a half million good God-fearing Jews will assure Jewish survival. Mere quality is not enough. There must be a large number of good Jews to assure Jewish survival. Therefore, I am convinced that a cultural and religious center in Palestine, composed of half a million or a million Jews, is not adequate to insure Jewish survival, and even less so to insure the exertion of a potent cultural influence on the Jewish communities in the Diaspora.

Early Ahad-Haamism did not insist on large numbers for the Jewish population of Palestine. It was formulated in the Jewish community of Tsarist Russia, which then numbered almost seven million souls, and was staunchly Jewish in religion and culture. Ahad Haam and his followers could therefore be satisfied with a Hebrew-speaking garden city, built around a university and with a few colonies as show places. We cannot accept this opinion, not because we fear for the physical safety of this small *Yishuv,* constituting as it would, a minority in a MacDonaldized Palestine. Such fears do not necessarily have to be entertained in a world of democracy ruled by countries with liberal traditions. We reject the White Paper solution because the fate of a *Yishuv* under such conditions is assimilation via Levantinism. A half million Jews in that corner of the world will not retain their Hebraic culture. The intellectuals and professionals will cater to the Arab and Western ruling forces. They will look for civil service jobs and business connections among the Arabs, and the English, who will, for a long time, continue to rule the projected Arab Federation. Jews in Palestine are bound to become, if they remain a minority, English speaking Levantines or Arabs of the Mosaic Faith, servile to the will of the majority and held by them in the same contempt as are the Christian Arabs in the world of Arabic Islam.

Jewish survival is, however, possible in a Jewish commonwealth with a Jewish majority which will have the right to guide at least its own cultural and religious destiny.

A bi-national or federative solution of the Arab problem in Palestine can be considered, therefore, only on the basis of a Jewish majority with a minimum population of two or three million.

The Danger of Fascist Counter-Revolution

There is another aspect of the post-war democratic world which I would like to touch upon. It is the danger of a fascist counter-revolution. There can not be any doubt that the Nazi leaders in Germany are preparing at present for their eventual return to power after their defeat in this war. And there cannot be any question of their plan to utilize anti-Semitism as the spearhead in their renewed attempt at world domination. If the German General Staff could, during the First World War, so assiduously prepare the legend of the Jewish "stab in the back," and, if the Protocols of the Elders of Zion were so easily accepted even by well-meaning people, does it not stand to reason that the foundations of the post-war anti-Semitic international are being laid today? Nor will the defeated countries be the only partners to this fascist counterplot. Will the Polish Endeks, so well represented in the Government-in-Exile, gracefully submit to a democratic world order? Will the appeasers and the isolationists in the democracies give up their reactionary plots or will they seek partners among similar rightist elements in other countries to bring a stop to the inevitable process of socialization and equality? Is there any doubt that anti-Semitism, intensified by the present world slaughter and enforced by the economic and political difficulties which will follow the cessation of hostilities, will furnish the most popular and most acceptable formula for the unity of this fascist counter-revolution? Not only must we warn the makers of the new world order against this danger; we must also defend the rights of Jews to leave their places of tragedy and mass slaughter, regardless of the new promises of the democratic world order of the future. Thus the problem of the refugee becomes not only one of purely physical or economic emigration, but mainly one of search for new homes, away from the clandestine Nazis, Endeks, Iron Guardists, or Awakening Magyars. Add to this the right of Jews to cultivate their own religion and culture in their homeland, and the collective need for Jewish survival, and Zionism becomes identical with all that is positive in Jewish life and completely in line with the application of the principles of democracy to national, cultural and religious self-determniation of the maltreated and misunderstood Jewish people.

Naturally, in evoking these needs and rights, we must address ourselves to the liberal elements in the democracies. It is too much to seek understanding for Zionism as an aspect of world democracy from the friends of the Mufti, or from the appeasers who betrayed Czechoslovakia and then turned sanctimonious religionists and spurious moralists. Among the many signs testifying to the awakening of the conscience of the democracies, the most potent are the developments among religious and labor groups. The decision of many Christian clergymen, particularly in England, to identify themselves and their message with the submerged classes should give us hope that the process of the deepening of democracy in the economic and cultural areas is one that is inevitable. It is from these elements which base their future on labor that we can expect, first, understanding, and later, sympathy and support. And it is to these elements that we should address the message of Jewish survival in and through Palestine.

Retribution Is Not Enough

The following statement by a committee of students of the Jewish Theological Seminary presents a serious challenge to American Jewry and particularly to the American Synagogue. There may be disagreement as to some of the methods proposed by this committee, but its recommendations certainly merit public discussion that may lead to action.

Editors.

WE Jews who live in the staid serenity of America have failed to grasp the immensity of the tragedy which has befallen our people, and this failure is perhaps the greatest part of the tragedy. Were the entire Jewish populations of Boston, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, Cleveland, St. Louis, Los Angeles, and Detroit slain, it would be little over half the number of those who have already been annihilated in Europe. What have the rabbis and leaders of these cities, or of New York, done to arouse themselves and their communities to the demands of the hour? What have the rabbinical bodies representing the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform groups attempted in order to impress upon their congregations the necessity for action now? What have they, or any other responsible organizations within American Jewish life, undertaken to awaken the conscience of the American people?

The United Nations, we are told, have promised retribution for these killings; but this retribution will be meted out *after* the war. We do not want retribution for Jews who have already died. We prefer help for those Jews who yet live. These protests are meaningless and ineffectual. Have any of the United Nations offered refuge to Hitler's victims? Have they taken any steps beyond protest to indicate that they are really concerned in stopping the bloodshed? In failing to act speedily, they have become partners in these horrible crimes.

As Jews and as American citizens it is our sacred duty to call upon the United Nations, and in particular upon our own country, to come to the aid of European Jewry *now;* and never for a moment must we relax our efforts until that help comes!

"The Nation" and "The New Republic" have been the only publications which have outlined plans for positive and immediate action to ameliorate the position of European Jewry. It seems almost incredible, but the Anglo-Jewish press has done little beyond documenting the tales of horror. Most of us, it appears, have already given up European Jewry in our hearts; others have acquiesced in their helplessness; and those who have not, have chosen the solutions which offer the least difficulties—and the least results. But in order to save five million human beings who have been doomed to die we must take bold and ambitious measures. Here are some of the things we should do:

1. Rescue Jews from Spain and Portugal and other countries threatened with Nazi invasion. Denmark and Bulgaria have expressed a willingness to permit Jews to leave their borders if proper arrangements can be made. These refugees might be brought to Allied countries in order to relieve the war labor shortage which is growing steadily worse.

2. Put pressure on the United Nations to obtain refuge for Jews in the neutral countries of Sweden, Turkey, and Switzerland. Urge that the United States allow Jews to settle in the Virgin Islands since they do not come under the immigration quota. If the United States will not change its immigration laws, then efforts should be made to establish

internment camps here for those refugees until the war ends. Jews who are in concentration camps in North Africa must be released, and the anti-Jewish laws there must be abrogated.

3. Put pressure on the United Nations to open up Palestine for large scale immigration. So that refugees in haven countries would not become permanent additions to their populations, guarantees should be made that they will go to Palestine after the war.

4. Request that the United Nations reconsider their blockade of Europe in order to permit the feeding of starving Jewish populations. Perhaps a program similar to the one now successfully operating in Greece could be carried out.

5. Put pressure on the United Nations to recognize a Jewish army to be composed of Palestinian and stateless Jews. The right should be given to refugees who are not subject to American draft laws to form separate commando units under the leadership of the United States army.

6. Put pressure on the United Nations to fully publicize the atrocities against the Jews to the German people and to the peoples of Europe by leaflets and short-wave broadcasts. So far, little has been done to arouse local populations in opposition to these mass murders.

To achieve such far-reaching goals we need mass action on a nation-wide scale, mass action that involves bucking the people and the American government. But bucking injustice is our religious duty!

We should therefore like to suggest that the religious leaders of America initiate the program of positive action along the lines we present here. Since the synagogue is the one institution in American Jewish life which can reach the greatest number of Jews, the synagogue should take the lead in this all-out effort to ameliorate the condition of European Jewry. Action should not be limited to synagogues, however. All Jewish organizations of whatever character should participate in this program designed (a) to make Jews and non-Jews aware of the policy of extermination; (b) to move them and the duly constituted bodies which represent them, both as Americans and as Jews, to present uniform demands to the United Nations to save as many lives as possible now:

1. An "Aid European Jewry Now" week should be proclaimed throughout America to be observed by Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews and those Jews unaffiliated with the synagogue. During this week special services should be held and programs arranged to stimulate activity for immediate help.

2. A Shivah Day, or its equivalent in Reform temples, should be observed in prayer and mourning in *all* synagogues, to be held on a Sunday when maximum communal participation can be expected. The day of prayer and mourning which took place on December 2 was unsuccessful. Most Jews became aware of the observance only after it was over. This time we should pray and mourn for a purpose —to call for concrete assistance from the United Nations and from our own country in particular.

3. During the entire week usual synagogue activities should be suspended and special programs dealing with how to save Jews should be arranged. Centers and Y's and all Jewish organizations such as B'nai B'rith, Hadassah, Habonim, etc., should undertake similar programs.

4. Large interfaith meetings should be held simultaneously throughout the country. There should be one meeting in each city, and in the large cities one in each section, where uniform demands for action should be made to the United Nations and our own government.

5. An Emergency Committee for European Jewry, representative of the

various organizations within American Jewish life should be created, with subcommittees in *each* city and in each local organization. These committees should use all the means of publicity available—radio, press, film advertisements, etc., to arouse public opinion to demand speedy action. They should approach every type of Gentile and non-sectarian organization—political, religious, humanitarian, and social—and urge them to lend their support. A central steering committee should conduct negotiations. The Congress of the United States must be induced to take a stand.

6. In order to make Jews ever conscious of their responsibility to work incessantly until help is offered European Jewry, a uniform prayer followed by a minute of silence should be recited wherever Jews gather in numbers of ten or more—at parties, weddings, meetings, etc., until the end of the war.

7. A uniform prayer, such as an extra Kaddish, should be recited by the entire congregation in all synagogue services until the end of the war. In this way we would mourn those Jews who have no one left to mourn for them, and we would always remind ourselves of our obligations to those Jews in Europe who still live.

The lives of five million Jews hang in the balance. It is up to us to do everything possible to save them *now*. Each day's delay means thousands of lives lost. When the final tabulation of those murdered has been published will American Jewry be able to say: *"Yadenu lo shafku et hadam hazeh"* (Our hands have not shed the blood")?

NOAH GOLINKIN
JEROME LIPNICK
N. BERTRAM SACHS

Book Notes

*MAJOR TRENDS OF JEWISH MYSTICISM, by Gershon G. Scholem. Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, and Schocken Publishing House, Jerusalem.**

RELIGION is mysticism, indefinable exactly as that term is. The religious soul feels the presence of the Beyond which beckons him, and to reach this distant shore is the constant object of his striving. The omnipresent dualisms—mind and matter, soul and body, here and there, now and eternity—are resolved by the experience of meeting with the living God, eternal, infinite and holy. Judaism from its very beginning was saturated with mystic doctrine. Prophet and psalmist, lawgiver and priest, haggadist and halakist—all tried to enter the sacred arcanum where the riddle of existence would be solved. They made the daring leap of faith across the abyss which spans thought and being, to use philosophical terminology, and their courage was regarded. They found God and peace, the only answer to man's questionings.

Jewish Mysticism (with a capital M) is the Jewish way to the divine. Jewish history and thought determine the peculiar character of this discipline which varies from age to age, as for example, in ancient Gnostics and early modern Hasidim. The classic form of Jewish esoteric doctrine is the Kabbalah which, in its origins,

* Dr. Levy's contribution to the Chicago Fellowship Number, unfortunately postponed for lack of space.

goes back to hoary antiquity, antedating its literary expression in the Zohar by many centuries. The very name Kabbalah (tradition), say the mystics, signifies that the teaching goes back to Adam. Yet this fact did not exclude change and innovation, e.g., the Lurianic interpretation; the new was the old, and the traditional always included the latest development, very much the same as the modifications in the Oral Law were always referred back to Sinai, and, however different the Law in its more recent manifestation, it was yet the Torah given to Moses.

As is known, Jewish Mysticism is based on the first chapters of Genesis and Ezekiel respectively, the *Maaseh Bereshit* and the vision of the *Merkabah* (the Heavenly Chariot). Beginning with these primary materials, Dr. Scholem recounts the growth, in its manifold aspects, from the Second Temple when the doctrines became the charters of a group of devout seekers after God. The story is a long and fascinating one and is told with a verve and a vividness that take it far above the realms of simply sound scholarship, with which the book abounds, into the higher air of beauty and reverence. The predecessors of our author in the study of Jewish mysticism had little sympathy for, and hence lacked understanding of, what is the main stream or rather the deep undercurrent of the Jewish religion. The vagaries, exaggerations and superficial lack of metaphysical approach, the hodge-podge subject matter, the strange, uncouth and artificial style of the Zohar repelled Graetz and other students and wrung from them a condemnatory verdict on the whole movement.

Dr. Scholem without minimizimg any of these features penetrates beneath them and reveals with marked clarity the trends of Jewish thought with which these lectures deal. He breaks a long silence that ignored and disregarded a vast library and treasure house rich in gems of thought of the Jewish religious spirit. Dr. Scholem makes these jewels gleam all the more brightly by setting them against their dark background of confused thought and conflicting elemental emotions. He has given us, and I use the words deliberately and advisedly, one of the great works on Judaism in our age. He has been more than a pioneer in an unworked field; he has been a true and competent guide. He not only brings to his task competency in the special domain which he treats, but he reveals himself at home in all mystical literature and in Jewish and general philosophy, and he possesses a profound understanding of the depths of the human soul. The book is exquisitely written and entrances the reader. To follow the master in his journeyings through the ages, through Biblical and Talmudic periods, through medieval Hasidism, through Zohar, Spanish and Oriental Kabbalism, through Sabbatianism and later Hasidism is enthralling. Those who have read his earlier works are delighted with this climax of his researches, this gathering of the threads and weaving them into this gorgeous tapestry—a new masterpiece to adorn the walls of the museum of living portraits of Jewish religious life and thought.

—Felix A. Levy

REALITIES & VALUES (*Cont. from p.* 10)
does the Emergency Committee have to say about them? At a juncture in our history, when so much depends upon the efficacy of our political work, no lover of Zion can permit such accusations to go unanswered. If they are not true, they should be denied, and the denial should be spread broadcast throughout the Jewish world. If they are true, the Emergency Committee is in duty bound to indicate how the corrections will be made.

THE LETTER OF THE NINETY-THREE MAIDENS

Some weeks ago, the Annual Conference of the Jewish Orthodox Rescue Committee received a letter from Chaja Feldman, one of 93 Jewish girls, pupils and teachers of the Beth Jakob Schools, who had been jailed by the Gestapo, then given a bath, stripped of all their clothes with the exception of their chemises and told that they would be visited by German soldiers. The girls said their last prayer (the *Vidui*), *took poison and died,* "in order to sanctify the name of God by their death as well as by their lives." Their letter, as it appears below, is based on a Hebrew version of it by Hillel Babli, which was published in *Hadoar,* Volume XXIII, No. 12, and was translated into English by Bertha-Badt Strauss. Dr. Dora Edinger has added the significant note on the source of the inspiration that led to this great act of *kiddush hashem* by the Ninety-Three Maidens.—*Editors.*

We washed our bodies and we grew clean.
We purified our souls and we grew quiet.
Death does not terrify us; we go out to meet him.
We served our God while we were alive;
We shall know how to sanctify Him by our death.
We made a covenant in our hearts, all the Ninety-Three:
Together we learned the Torah, together we will meet our end.
We read the Psalms together, we read and we felt relieved.
We confessed our sins together, and steady grew our hearts.
Now we feel well prepared and ready to breathe our last.
Now may the Unclean come to defile us; we are not afraid.
We will drink the cup of poison and perish in front of their eyes,
Pure and undefiled, as is the Law with the daughters of Israel.
To Mother Sarah we will come and lovingly clasp her knees:
Here we are! We stood the test, the test of the binding of Isaac!
Arise and pray for our people with us, for the nation of Israel:
Pity oh merciful Father! Oh pity the people that knew Thee!
For there is no more pity in men.
Reveal Thy hidden kindness and save Thy downtrodden children;
Save and keep Thy world!
The hour of Neilah is come, and quiet grow our souls.
One more prayer we utter: Brethren, wherever you are,
Say the Kaddish for us, for the Ninety-Three daughters of Israel.

A FOOT-NOTE TO THE LETTER OF THE NINETY-THREE MAIDENS

IN *Salute to Valor* LINTON Wells says: "The destruction of the Palembang oilfields was undoubtedly the largest voluntary sacrifice in the history of the world, with the sole exception of the demolition of the Dnieprostroy Dam by the Russians." Yet the sacrifice of the young students of the Beth Jakob school should be recorded for the future history of our times, in testimony of how the Jews reacted. I have met people that could not believe this sacrifice to have been offered in the way it has been reported. Since I have been in the Beth Jakob seminary, I am perfectly convinced that these Jewish girls proved, in this last test, that they were true to the spirit of their education.

In 1932-33 I was in Cracow to deliver some lectures. The seminary was then located in a tall, unfinished building, in the midst of the Kazimierz, the Jewish settlement of the medieval town. It was overcrowded by young eager students from poor and isolated communities, who had moved in even before the floors had been laid. The first Beth Jakob school had started in the private home of Mrs. Sara Schenierer. She had come to Vienna as a refugee during the First World War,

and there found access to Jewish learning, frowned upon by Orthodox educators, who opposed the teaching of Torah to girls. But Mrs. Schenierer had realized that, in the precarious situation of East European Jewry, the spirit of Jewish womanhood was the dam that might save it. First in her modest home, then in an apartment, she taught her young students, and finally moved to the seminary where I spent unforgettable days. The Friday night service was conducted by Mrs. Schenierer; no men were present. Advanced students gave proof of their ability in lectures or rather sermons on the *sidra.* The entire school organization from kindergarten to seminary took care of about 30,000 students, many of them so poor that they later paid back their tuition out of their meager salaries.

Every summer former students were reunited in study camps in the Carpathian mountains, and the spirit of devotion and faith, in the presence of often insurmountable odds, kept this unique organization full of its amazing vitality. It was not the spirit of ascetic nuns. Mrs. Schenierer herself, and many of the teachers that had been educated by her were married, and they were always fully aware that their teachings might, at any moment, meet the supreme test. Even in the comparatively normal conditions of Jewry in Poland between the two great wars, the existence of the Beth Jakob school organization had the startling effect of a miracle, a flame kept alive by will power and burning faith only. Its sublime victory should be remembered as a pledge of the ultimate victory of the spirit over might and power.

DORA EDINGER

(*Continued from Page* 8)

a Jewish problem; it is an American problem. If we American Jews do not act quickly, we shall be guilty not only as Jews but as Americans, and as human beings.

It may not be feasible to carry through the whole program outlined by the Seminary students, but we must do everything humanly possible in this situation. We must do nothing less than our best, and we must do it now. Nothing must stand in the way of organized united action on the part of all American Jews to save European Jewry. Let us proceed along all lines, and let us proceed at once!

Correspondence

A Kindly Rebuke

Sirs:

Please do not misunderstand me. I value your magazine very highly, but I do wish that you would reprimand those who disagree with you in a more kindly manner. I would rather have the opposition from within, and, as you know, before water can become clear, it has to flow over many rocks and stones. Believe me to be sincere.

HARRY ALTMAN,
Hollywood, Calif.

Dr. Pool Answers His Critic

Sirs:

I have before me the review of *The American Jew,* published in your issue of January 8th. I take no exception to your reviewer's strictures on the chapter I wrote insofar as they are based on honest differences of opinion and judgment. But I must point out that your reviewer has misconceived the whole function of the chapter assigned to me. Mine was not the task of interpreting various philosophies and approaches in Jewish religious life. This was the purpose of the chapter allotted to Rabbi Milton Steinberg. It was my less pleasant duty to give a factual presentation of the functioning of the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Synagogue in the historic American Jewish community. My chapter, therefore, in all honesty could not close its eyes to the weaknesses inevitable in the practical application of ideas to life. Your reviewer's criticisms should have been directed against these weaknesses, not against the recording of them.

I regret also to have to add that much of your reviewer's criticism is based on clear misquotation and misinterpretation of my words.

DAVID DE SOLA POOL,
Rabbi, Shearith Israel, New York, N. Y.